(c) No final decision has so far been taken by the Government of Orissa on the proposal of Pohang Steel Company of South Korea.

Customs duty on steel

4015. SHRI MURLI DEORA:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel industry has asked Government to increase the customs duty on seconds and defectives to 40 per cent from 20 per cent;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) view taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Steel Alliance, which represents the main steel products (except TISCO) has requested for restoration of 40% customs duty on seconds and defectives.

(c) The customs duty on prime non-alloy steel and prime alloy steel is 5% and 10% respectively. A reasonable duty differential of 15% with prime non-alloy steel and 10% with prime alloy steel is maintained even after the duty on seconds and defectives has been lowered from 40% to 20%. Thereforer in the present circumstances the Government does not consider it necessary to restore customs duty on seconds and defectives to 40%.

Employment *vis-a-vis* exploration of Iron Ore

† 4016. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that proper exploration of Iron ore in Orissa can provide employment to about 2 crore persons; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.